

Merritt Parkway, Greenwich (southbound)

HAER No. CT-132

Service Station

Abutting the north side of the Merritt Parkway,
servicing the southbound lanes at the 0.3 mile mark

Greenwich

Fairfield County

Connecticut

HAER,
CONN,
1-GREWI,
6-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Historic American Engineering Record
MERRITT PARKWAY,
GREENWICH (southbound) SERVICE STATION

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Location: Abutting the north side of the Merritt Parkway, servicing the southbound lanes at the 0.3-mile mark; Greenwich, Fairfield County, Connecticut

UTM 18.611490.4543970
Quad: Glenville, Connecticut

Date of Construction: 1941

Engineer: Connecticut Highway Department

Architect: George Dunkelberger, Connecticut Highway Department

Significance: The service stations of the Merritt illustrate the Connecticut Highway Department's policy of limiting private commercial development and conforming to aesthetic treatment sympathetic to a parkway setting. Built and owned by the state, these were, and continue to be, leased to private companies. Stylistically these Colonial Revival structures were influenced by the service stations of the Westchester County, New York, parkway system.

Description: Originally the Colonial Revival-styled service station was a one-story building with side-gable roof over a three-unit floor plan. The center unit is larger than the other two and has a higher roof. An addition on the east end almost doubles the size of the station. The exterior walls are interrupted, coursed random ashlar, and the roof is covered with slate. There is a ridge chimney at the east end of the center gable. A wood dormer with a clock is centered in the center gable. The center room originally had three eight-over-eight-light double-hung sash in the arched openings, with shutters. These windows and most of the front wall have been removed and replaced with a glass and aluminum storefront. The center room has a glass door at the east end and a solid door at the west end of the front wall. The west room has a door and a six-over-six-light double-hung sash window on its west face. The outer rooms have octagonal windows, and the addition has textured-glass windows with simulated six-over-six-light double-hung sash flanked by white shutters.

The center room contains the cashier's booth, coolers, and food racks. The east room has a beverage bar and is the passageway to the addition containing public restrooms, and the west room is storage.

Originally the service station was located behind a semi-circular concrete pad with gasoline pumps in the middle. The current pumps are on a rectangular concrete pad with a low-pitched gabled canopy.

History:

Anticipating drastic fluctuations in directional traffic volume between the morning and evening rush hours, parkway planners decided that identical stations should be located directly opposite each other on the parkway. This way attendants could be shifted across the road during peak traffic periods. Although owned by the state, the business was originally leased to the Tide Water Associated Oil Company, which paid \$250 a month rent and 3.39 cents per gallon of gasoline sold.

This station has had several alterations through the years. In 1958, it was remodeled and a 900-square foot addition was attached to the east side of the structure. At the same time the acceleration and deceleration lanes were lengthened and widened, the parking area was expanded. In 1988, the interior of the station was totally renovated and new pumps were installed.

Sources:

"Motorists Demand Fast Service at New
Parkway Stations." National Petroleum News
30 October 1940: 35-37.

Contract Card File. Map File and Engineering
Records Department, Connecticut Department of
Transportation: Wethersfield, CT. This
includes construction drawings, copies of
which are in the HAER field records.

Historians:

Corinne Smith, HAER Engineer, and Todd Thibodeau,
HABS/HAER Historian, August 1992.